

WASHINGTON – The House of Representatives today unanimously passed legislation introduced by U.S. Rep. Harry Mitchell to provide for long-term, regional efforts to protect endangered species along the Lower Colorado River.

“This is a big win for Arizona,” said Mitchell. “We’ve been seeking Congressional authorization for this program for many years and I’m proud to have worked to move this legislation forward. I appreciate the broad support my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have given this bill, and I hope the Senate will act soon.”

A decade in the making, the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program is a unique partnership developed by the U.S. Department of Interior in conjunction with the states Arizona, California, and Nevada, as well as stakeholders in the three participating states, to protect the Lower Colorado River’s environment while ensuring the certainty of essential water and power operations.

In 2005, as a member of the Arizona State Senate, Mitchell voted to approve the State of Arizona’s participation in the Lower Colorado River Multispecies Conservation Program. Governor Janet Napolitano signed the bill into law on April 13, 2005.

Last year, Mitchell and U.S. Rep. Dean Heller, R-Nev., introduced H.R. 2515, which authorizes the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Act (MSCP). The bill cleared the House Natural Resources Committee earlier this month.

A companion bill, S. 300, is currently pending before the U.S. Senate.

The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program Act was previously introduced by U.S. Rep. J.D. Hayworth in the 109th Congress. In 2006, the House Committee on Natural Resources held a hearing on the bill, but ultimately did not approve it.